



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request**

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

*Agency:* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

*Title:* NMFS Observer Programs' Information That Can be Gathered Only Through Questions.

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0593.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Request:* Regular (extension of a currently approved information collection).

*Number of Respondents:* 3,699.

*Average Hours Per Response:* 51 minutes.

*Burden Hours:* 27,238.

*Needs and Uses:* This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) deploys fishery observers on United States (U.S.) commercial fishing vessels and to fish processing plants in order to collect biological and economic data. NMFS has at least one observer program in each of its five Regions. These observer programs provide the most reliable and effective method for obtaining information that is critical for the conservation and management of living marine resources. Observer programs primarily obtain information through direct observations by employees or agents of NMFS; and such observations are not subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). However, observer programs also collect the following information that requires clearance under the PRA: (1) standardized questions of fishing vessel captains/crew or fish processing plant managers/staff, which include gear and performance questions, safety questions, and trip costs, crew size and other economic questions; (2) questions asked by observer program staff/contractors to plan observer deployments; (3) forms that are completed by observers and that fishing vessel captains are asked to review and sign; (4) questionnaires to evaluate observer performance; and (5) a form to certify that a fisherman is the permit holder when requesting observer data from the observer on the vessel. NMFS seeks to renew OMB PRA clearance for these information collections.

The information collected will be used to: (1) monitor catch and bycatch in federally managed commercial fisheries; (2) understand the population status and trends of fish stocks and protected species, as well as the interactions between them; (3) determine the quantity and distribution of net benefits derived from living marine resources; (4) predict the biological, ecological, and economic impacts of existing management action and proposed management options; and (5) ensure that the observer programs can safely and efficiently collect the

information required for the previous four uses. In particular, these biological and economic data collection programs contribute to legally mandated analyses required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), Executive Order 12866 (EO 12866), as well as a variety of state statutes. The confidentiality of the data will be protected as required by the MSA, Section 402(b).

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Frequency:* On occasion.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at [reginfo.gov](http://reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to [OIRA\\_Submission@omb.eop.gov](mailto:OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov) or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Dated: September 15, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

*NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.*

**BILLING CODE: 3510-22-S.**

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